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TAGS: [PREL](#) [CG](#) [BE](#)
SUBJECT: BELGIAN PLANS FOR SEPTEMBER 23-24 VISIT OF DRC
PRESIDENT KABILA

Classified By: Political Counselor Theodore H Andrews,
Reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

11. (C) DRC President Kabila now plans to visit Brussels on September 23-24, according to Belgian Special Envoy for the Great Lakes Smets, who relayed the information during a meeting with visiting U.S. Special Envoy Leader. The visit comes at an "awkward" time for Belgium, Smets noted, adding that the continuing effort to form a new coalition has complicated preparations for Kabila's arrival. Despite the timing, the Belgian team responsible for Congolese affairs was pleased that Kabila had decided to invite himself since it reflected a new willingness on Kabila's part to reach out diplomatically.

12. (C) Kabila's last minute decision to arrive on September 23, rather than September 21, resulted from his equally last minute decision to meet in Goma with senior military leaders. Smets said Kabila has asked for a long list of appointments on the day of his arrival, including with senior EU official. The following day, Belgian PM Verhofstadt would host a working breakfast with senior ministers (Foreign Affairs, Defense, and Development Cooperation). Kabila intended to depart at midday on September 24 after an audience with King Albert II.

13. (C) The Belgians were pleasantly surprised that Kabila's list of subjects to talk about was the same as their list:

- The situation in the East;
- Great Lakes Economic Community;
- Uganda/Angola border demarcation;
- Mineral extraction issues; and
- "The fight against impunity," a subject added by the Belgians.

The Belgians and the DRC leadership worked this agenda out during the September 25-26 visit to Brussels of DRC FM Nyamwisi and Kabila's chef de cabinet.

14. (C) The situation in the Kivus was clearly the most important subject for discussion. Belgian leadership will encourage Kabila to follow the diplomatic path as he deals with the Eastern Congo situation. They believe Kabila's new found interest in doing so reflects a realization of his military vulnerability and political/diplomatic strength. A further source of optimism (for the Belgian MFA at least) has come from Kabila's recent statements acknowledging the reasons behind the problems caused by Nkunda. Referring to Nkunda, Smets noted that he believed the South Africans were still willing to provide him with a comfortable exile.

15. (C) Other topics for the meeting were less immediately critical, but still important. The border demarcation question involved making preparations for a meeting in

Brussels of Congolese and Belgian experts on the colonial era border of Congo. This gathering would take place in mid-October. The discussion of mineral extraction would involve an attempt by the Belgians to ensure "transparency" in the workings of the commission Kabila established to examine the validity of extant mining concessions. Smets said the Belgian government was deeply concerned that a recent Chinese agreement with the DRC was going to provide an incentive for the DRC to pay for a road between Lubumbashi and Zambia with mining rights transferred from their current owners.

16. (SBU) Smets promised us a readout as soon as the Kabila meetings concluded.
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